DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 392 585 RC 020 474

AUTHOR	Trahant, Mark N.
TITLE	Pictures of Our Nobler Selves: A History of Native American Contributions to News Media.
INSTITUTION	Vanderbilt Univ., Nashville, TN. Freedom Forum First Amendment Center.
REPORT NO	95-F05
PUB DATE	Oct 95
NOTE	52p.; Photographs will not reproduce adequately.
AVAILABLE FROM	Freedom Forum First Amendment Center at Vanderbilt, 1207 18th Ave. South, Nashville, TN 37212 (free).
PUB TYPE	Historical Materials (060) -- Information Analyses (070)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Alaska Natives; American Indian History; American Indians; Broadcast Journalism; Cultural Maintenance; *Journalism; Journalism History; *Mass Media Effects; *Newspapers; News Reporting; Politics
IDENTIFIERS	American Indian Contributions; *Journalists; Media Bias; *Native Americans

ABSTRACT

Many American Indians deeply resent distorted depictions of themselves in the media. They are convinced that false media caricatures have helped rob them of their history. This report addresses a fascinating incongruity: the contributions made by Native Americans to the U.S. news media--a media that has played a key role in creating the flawed portrait. This booklet documents the accomplishments of such journalists as Elias Boudinot, who in 1827 became the founding editor of "The Cherokee Phoenix"; John Rollin Ridge, a nephew of Boudinot who wrote books and articles about the California Gold Rush and Indian affairs, and who founded several California newspapers; Ora Eddleman Reed, a Cherokee who became the first Native American talk show host in 1924; and Hattie Kauffman, a Nez Perce journalist of ABC News who in 1989 was the first American Indian to report a news story on national television. Uncovering forgotten journalism history is the first purpose of this report. The second is to validate the notion that it is essential for American Indians and Alaska Natives to work in the media, both tribal and mainstream, in order to provide relevant local news to Native communities and to influence the images of Native Americans that are projected to the country. Native Americans can contribute to journalism and still maintain tribal roots. Contains references in endnotes, and a bibliography of 46 books, 19 articles, and 2 dissertations. (TD)

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A history of Native American contributions to news media

Mark N. Trahant

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Pictures of Our Nobler Selves

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THE FREEDOM FORUM
FIRST AMENDMENT CENTER
AT VANDERBILT UNIVERSITY

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Pictures of Our Nobler Selves:
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By Mark N. Trahant

1995, The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center
1207 18th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37212
website: http: www.fac.org

Publication number: 95-F05

First Printing: October 1995

FOREWORD

There is an old Sioux adage that goes: "A people without history is like wind on the buffalo grass."

Many citizens across the nation currently are upset because many American Indians deeply resent and protest against distorted depictions of them in the media. Residents of cities such as Atlanta and Cleveland and Kansas City don't understand why members of most Native American tribes object to cartoon-like portrayals of them as Braves or Indians or Chiefs.

Part of the answer, of course, is that Native Americans, having been stripped of identity, dignity and distinction for more than two centuries, are convinced that false media caricatures have helped rob them of their history.

This report by Mark Trahant, the executive news editor of *The Salt Lake Tribune*, fills a large blank in that history and addresses in-depth, for the first time, a fascinating incongruity: the contributions made by Native Americans to the news media in the United States—a media that has played a key role in creating the flawed portrait.

Trahant, a Shoshone-Bannock, worked as a scholar at The Freedom Forum First Amendment Center, researching and reporting on those contributions.

His study documents them, ranging from the work of Elias Boudinot, who in 1827 became the founding editor of *The Cherokee Phoenix*, to Ora Eddleman Reed, a Cherokee who became the first Native American talk show host in 1924, to Hattie Kauffman, a Nez Perce journalist for ABC News who in 1989 was the first American Indian to report a news story on national television.

Trahant points with candor to the ordeals Native American journalists have

faced from the time of Boudinot to the present. Some of those problems have been as a result of conflicts with non-tribal forces. *The Phoenix* was forced out of business in 1835 when its offices were destroyed by the Georgia Guard and its type dumped in a well.

Other problems for editors have come because officials of the tribes, like government leaders everywhere, resent and will not tolerate press critics, and the federal constitutional right of press liberty has no force on reservations.

The efforts of these journalists have not been limited to work on reservations with tribal publications. Again, beginning with Boudinot, there have been reporters, writers and editors whose work on mainstream newspapers has been substantial. John Rollin Ridge, for example, was the founding editor of *The Sacramento Daily Bee*. Trahant himself follows in that tradition at *The Salt Lake Tribune*.

With this work, Mark Trahant contributes to the preservation of his people's history, that their passage will leave marks more enduring than wind on the buffalo grass.

JOHN SEIGENTHALER

Let's start with an old-fashioned scoop.

Hattie Kauffman was sleeping in a Honolulu hotel room on February 24, 1989. "I got a call in the middle of the night. It was two, three or four [o'clock] in the morning. I was excited, thrilled. I jumped up and met my producer, who got a similar call," she recalled.

The urgent assignment was from ABC News. There had been an accident: The skin of a Boeing 747 had peeled from its fuselage on United Airlines' Flight 811. Kauffman and her producer rushed to the airport, taking pictures and interviewing survivors.

"With the time difference, we had an early deadline: noon Honolulu time. It was frustrating because the clock kept ticking away [toward] the deadline. The editing and satellite feed sites were not at the same place. I was scared, thinking, 'I am writing a story for the evening news.'"[1]

Kauffman earned this story with nearly a decade of experience, mostly hard-news reporting for KING-TV in Seattle. But as national correspondent for ABC's *Good Morning America*, Kauffman worked for the entertainment division of the company, and it was rare for reporters to cross over and contribute to the evening newscast.

"I was nervous, and I get on the phone with New York to edit the script—and it is OK. They didn't say, 'What?'"[2]

"We're minutes away from the broadcast at this point," Kauffman said. The satellite feed was in a different part of the city. Kauffman and her producer raced

across town and turned onto a one-way street. The wrong way. So the pair hopped out of the car a block away from the satellite center.

"We were running on foot, we jumped a hedge [before entering the building]—it was a scene from *Broadcast News*—and right as we popped the tape in the machine, Peter Jennings came on and introduced our story from Tokyo. It was live from that machine."

Hattie Kauffman

Jennings and the *World News Tonight* team were pleased. The story was flawless, and it was the only taped piece from Hawaii. The competition at CBS and NBC had to rely on desk reports from New York.

"After it aired, we were cheering, jumping up and down, and at that moment I realized, 'I'm hungry. I'm thirsty.' We were so busy we had not thought about our bodies' needs; they were suspended while we were crashing this story."

Kauffman's deadline piece was more than a scoop. This Nez Perce[3] woman was cast on the network evening news in a new role: She was neither a protester nor a dancer in traditional costume. She was a reporter. And in 1989, less than a decade ago, this was the first time an American Indian had communicated a news story to a national audience.[4]

VEHICLES OF INTELLIGENCE

Hattie Kauffman's entry into network news is recent, but Native Americans have made significant contributions to journalism for nearly two centuries. This history starts in the 1820s in the Cherokee Nation's capital of "New Town" or New

Echota, Georgia. The leaders of the Cherokee Nation believed their destiny was linked to making "their nation an intelligent and virtuous people."[5] So the nation went about the task they called civilization: cultivating land, ideas and laws.

But it was the invention of the Cherokee alphabet that was the powerful agent of change. In a couple of months—a tick of a second on a nation's clock—thousands of Cherokee people learned to read and write in their own language.

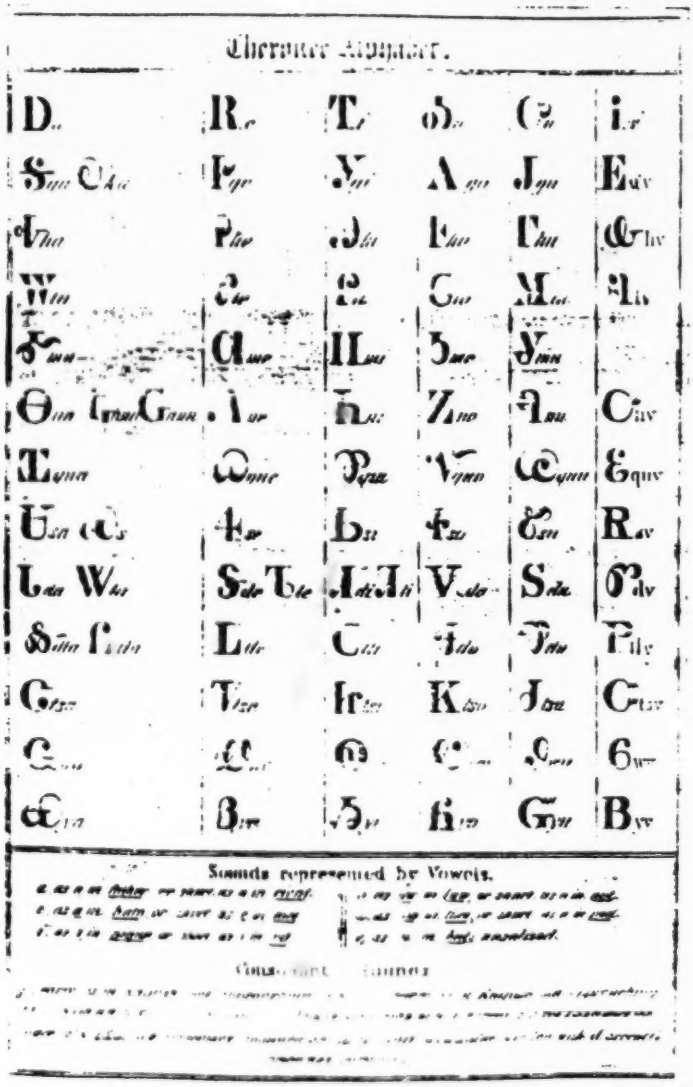
"Most historians credit Sequoyah,[6] the most famous Cherokee, with the invention of the syllabary. However, some oral historians contend that the written Cherokee language is much, much older. But even if there was an ancient written Cherokee language, it was lost to the Cherokees until Sequoyah developed the syllabary," wrote Cherokee Principal Chief Wilma Mankiller in 1993. "The development of the syllabary was one of the events which was destined to have a profound influence on our tribe's future history. This extraordinary achievement marks the only known instance of an individual creating a totally new system of writing."[7]

If there was to be civilization, a Republic, then it would come on Cherokee terms. Written Cherokee had "swept away that barrier which [had] long existed and opened a spacious channel for the instruction of adult Cherokees."[8]

At first, written Cherokee was primarily for Christian instruction. But tribal leaders also saw the vision of a national newspaper. In 1827, Principal Chief John Ross and the national council selected a young man who had taken the name Elias Boudinot as the first editor of *The Cherokee Phoenix*.

"To obtain a correct and complete knowledge of these people, there must exist a vehicle of Indian intelligence, altogether different from those which have heretofore been employed," Boudinot said in a speech raising money for the project.[9]

"The columns of *The Cherokee Phoenix* will be filled, partly with English, and partly with Cherokee print; and all matter which is of common interest will be given in both languages in parallel columns.



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"As the great object of *The Phoenix* will be the benefit of the Cherokees, the following subjects will occupy its columns.

"1. The laws and public documents of the Nation.

"2. Account of the manners and customs of the Cherokees, and their progress in Education, Religion and the arts of civilized life; with such notices of other Indian tribes as our limited means of information will allow.

Cherokee Phoenix *building in New Echota, Ga.*

"3. The principal interesting news of the day.

"4. Miscellaneous articles, calculated to promote Literature, Civilization, and Religion among the Cherokees."

The Phoenix was supposed to start publishing with the new year of 1828, but the paper supply did not arrive in time. On February 21, 1828, the first edition of The Phoenix appeared.

"As *The Phoenix* is a national newspaper, we shall feel ourselves bound to devote it to national purposes. 'The laws and public documents of the Nation,' and matters relating to the welfare and condition of the Cherokees as a people, will be faithfully published in Cherokee and English." Boudinot wrote in the first issue. "As the liberty of the press is so essential to the improvement of the mind, we shall consider our paper, a free paper, with, however, proper and usual restrictions. ... But the columns of this newspaper shall always be open to free and temperate discussions on matters of politics, religion, and so forth."

The usual and proper restrictions, however, were left to different interpretations by the state of Georgia and the Cherokee government.

Georgians had been trying to oust their Cherokee neighbors for decades. Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, Secretary of State John Quincy Adams and President James Monroe met with a Cherokee delegation in 1824 to extinguish aboriginal title in Georgia, and this meeting was seen by Georgians as a federal promise for removal.

But the Cherokee delegation, led by Boudinot's uncle, Major Ridge, was equally firm in its right to stay. Even if the United States paid all of the money in its treasury or exchanged twice as much land, the Cherokee Nation said, such compensation would fall short of equity. Moreover, the Cherokee Nation said it could not recognize "the sovereignty of a state within the limits of [its] territory."

Logotype of The Cherokee Phoenix

The state enacted a number of laws in the 1820s and 1830s designed to destroy Cherokee sovereignty—and the will of tribal members to resist "removal" from their homeland. The greed of the Cherokee's Georgia neighbors intensified after gold was found in 1828, and tribal members were forbidden by law from mining, even on their own land. A removal champion, Wilson Lumpkin, was elected governor on the Union Party Ticket in 1831. Union Party newspapers predicted the new governor would settle this problem once and for all, aided by the old Indian fighter and now president, Andrew Jackson. The state annexed Cherokee lands, banned the tribal legislature from meeting and seized property from tribal members.

"Yes, this is the bitter cup prepared for us by a republican and religious government," Boudinot wrote. "We shall drink it to the dregs."

What really infuriated Georgia was that the Cherokee Nation was indeed civilized. Boudinot wrote in the June 17, 1829, edition that perhaps Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe "were only tantalizing us when they encouraged us in the pursuit of agriculture and government. ... Why were we not told long ago that we could not be permitted to establish a government within the limits of any state?

"The Cherokees have always had a government of their own. Nothing, however, was said when we were governed by savage laws."

Liberty was as dear to Boudinot and to the Cherokee as it was to the founders of the United States of America. And it was inconceivable that these freedoms would be denied to any Americans. *The Midgeville Statesman and Patriot* said it was time for the Cherokees to submit to inevitable destiny.

"What destiny?" Boudinot replied. "To be slandered and then butchered?"

A new Georgia law required all non-Cherokees to take an oath of allegiance to the state or leave Cherokee Territory. Many Georgians believed that the Cherokee could do nothing on their own—and if the outside agitators were removed, the Cherokee would leave too. Some even believed that Boudinot was only a front for a white man who was the true editor of *The Phoenix*. Boudinot dismissed this idea a number of times: "It has already been stated to the public that *The Phoenix* was under Cherokee influence. It has never been, nor was it ever intended to be, under the influence of any Missionary or White man."

Nonetheless, Georgian authorities started a campaign to arrest non-Cherokees who refused to take the oath.

"This week we present to our readers but half a sheet," Boudinot wrote in *The Phoenix* on Feb. 19, 1831. "One of our printers has left us; and we expect another (who is a white man) to quit us very soon, either to be dragged to the Georgia penitentiary for a term not less than four years."

Nor could the editor ask for more help—any other white printer would be arrested too.

"And our friends will please remember," the editor wrote, "we cannot invite another white printer to our assistance without subjecting him to the same punishment: and to have in our employ one who has taken the oath to support the laws of Georgia, which now suppress the Cherokees, is utterly out of the question. Thus is liberty of the press guaranteed by the Constitution of Georgia."

On March 26, 1831, *The Phoenix* reported the arrest of several non-Indian missionaries by the Georgia Guard, the state militia. One was Samuel Worcester, who in addition to helping Boudinot at the paper was also the Cherokee Nation's postmaster. However, the state judge released Worcester and the missionaries, saying they were in the Cherokee Nation as "agents of the government."

Even though the state court sided—at least in part—with the Cherokee cause, Boudinot was amazed. "We were very much surprised to hear that the missionaries were discharged on the ground of their being agents of the government. Who ever thought of such a thing before? It shows that a Judge may twist into law what shape he pleases."

The Georgia Guard's Col. C.H. Nelson also harassed Boudinot. The editor was brought before the Guard for a possible libel action against *The Phoenix*. Once Boudinot was in custody, Nelson told him that he could not be prosecuted under Georgia law, but if the reportage of the Guard's activities did not cease, Nelson would tie him to a tree and give him a sound whipping.

Boudinot responded with a series of editorials on the Guard and freedom. Boudinot wrote: "In this free country, where the liberty of the press is solemnly guaranteed, is this the way to obtain satisfaction for an alleged injury committed in a newspaper? I claim nothing but what I have a right to claim as a man—I complain of nothing of which a privileged white editor would not complain."[10]

Meanwhile, Boudinot's friend Samuel Worcester continued to wait in a Georgia prison. On March 3, 1832, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of the Cherokee cause in the landmark decision, *Worcester v. Georgia*. Chief Justice John Marshall wrote: "The Cherokee Nation, then, is a distinct community, oc-

cupying its own territory, with boundaries accurately described in which the laws of Georgia can have no force and which the citizens of Georgia have no right to enter, but with the assent of the Cherokees themselves, ... the acts of Georgia are repugnant to the constitution, laws and treaties of the United States."[11]

The Court reversed the Georgia courts and said state law did not apply in Cherokee territory.[12]

"It is a glorious news," Boudinot wrote his brother Stand Watie, who was acting editor of *The Phoenix* while Boudinot traveled across the country to raise money for the newspaper. "The laws of the State are declared by the highest judicial tribunal in the Country null and void. It is a great triumph on the part of the Cherokees so far as the question of their rights were concerned."[13]

Boudinot predicted "a new era on the Indian question." Perhaps in theory. But the court ruling only intensified the emotions of the Georgians. Both the state and the federal government increased pressure on the Cherokees to move West, and six months later, Boudinot was convinced that removal was inevitable. He was bitterly disappointed by the government's failure to enforce its own Supreme Court decision, and he came to believe that the Cherokee had no options left.

This epiphany placed Boudinot in direct conflict with the leadership of the Cherokee government. It was clear that the very discussion of removal was illegal (and considered treasonous).

The Cherokee Constitution did not guarantee a free press. And tribal politicians argued that the editor, and the newspaper, were instruments of public policy. Chief Ross even called *The Phoenix* a "public press" and said it "should be cherished as an important vehicle in the diffusion of general information, and as a no less powerful auxiliary in asserting and supporting our political rights ....

"The press being the public property of the nation, it would ill become its character if such infringements upon the feelings of the people should be tolerated. In other respects, the liberty of the press should be as free as the breeze that glides upon the surface."[14]

The contradiction in Ross' statement is telling: *The Phoenix* was as free as the breeze—until its writings infringed on the feelings of the people or those of the leadership.

On Aug. 11, 1832, Boudinot resigned as editor.

"Were I to continue as editor, I should feel myself in a most peculiar and delicate situation. I do not know whether I could, at the same time, satisfy my own views, and the views of the authorities of the nation. My situation would then be as embarrassing as it would be peculiar and delicate. I do conscientiously believe it to be the duty of every citizen to reflect upon the dangers with which we are surrounded; to view the darkness which seems to lie before our people—our prospects, and the evils with which we are threatened; to talk over all these matters, and, if possible, come to some definite and satisfactory conclusion."[15]

Boudinot believed in discourse, conversation in the printed columns that debated the merits of a policy, even a policy as controversial as removal.

A few days after Boudinot's resignation, Chief Ross wrote to the National Council that *The Phoenix* ought to be continued under the leadership of a new editor.

"The views of the public authorities should continue and ever be in accordance with the will of the people; and the views of the editor of the national paper be the same. The toleration of diversified views to the columns of such a paper would not fail to create fermentation and confusion among our citizens, and in the end prove injurious to the welfare of the nation."[16]

Ross hired Elijah Hicks as the new editor of *The Phoenix*. And few questioned the new editor's loyalty; he was Ross' brother-in-law.

Boudinot continued to write letters and joined the political opposition consisting of his relatives—the Ridge, Boudinot and Watie[17] families—as well as other Cherokee families who favored negotiating a new treaty.

"Removal, then, is the only remedy—the only practicable remedy," Boudinot wrote in a letter to Chief Ross. "What is the prospect in reference to your plan of relief, if you are understood at all to have any plan? It is dark and gloomy

Map of Cherokee territory, 1900.

beyond description. Subject the Cherokees to the laws of the States in their present condition?"[18]

The Cherokee Nation was divided. Boudinot's allies became known as the Treaty Party, while supporters of the chief became the Ross Party. But political parties were moot at this point anyway: Georgia made it illegal for the Cherokees

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to meet or hold elections. The newspaper was destroyed by the Georgia Guard in October of 1835, and its lead type dumped into a well.

Boudinot and other Treaty Party members signed a removal treaty in December and agreed to leave Georgia for land in what is now Oklahoma. "I know that I take my life into my hand, as our fathers have also done. ... Oh what is a man worth who will not die for his people? Who is there here that will not perish, if this great Nation may be saved?"[19]

Boudinot knew exactly what was at stake: It was treason, and tribal law clearly called for the death penalty for agreeing to removal. However, none of the 20 Cherokees who signed the New Echota Treaty was ever charged with any tribal offense. In the winter of 1838, some 14,000 Cherokees were marched from Georgia to the new lands on the Trail of Tears. The Boudinots moved to Park Hill, Cherokee Nation, where the bitter dispute continued.

On June 28, 1839, some Cherokee men rode up to Boudinot's house on horses. They asked for medicine. Boudinot went to get it.

"He walked but a few rods when his shriek was heard by his hired men, who ran to his help: but before they could come back the deed was done. A stab in the back with a knife, and seven gashes in the head with a hatchet, did the bloody work," wrote his friend and neighbor Samuel Worcester. "In his own view he risked his life to save his people from ruin, and he realized his fears."[20]

The story of *The Phoenix* illustrates the central quandary of tribal journalism today. Does a tribal newspaper serve its community by printing discourse? Or, does it aid the enemies of tribal government by revealing a community's weakness? This debate is no more resolved now than when Boudinot died. It is also one of the reasons for the success of independent newspapers, such as Tim Giago's *Indian Country Today* and Paul DeMain's *News From Indian Country*.

Golden Words

Elias Boudinot was not the only assassination victim on that day in June. His uncle, Major Ridge, died in an ambush near the Arkansas border. And, at dawn, raiders pulled his cousin John Ridge from his bed and stabbed him nearly 30 times.

Twelve-year-old John Rollin Ridge witnessed his father's murder. Fearing for her family, Sarah Ridge moved her children from the Cherokee Nation to Fayetteville, Arkansas. But the border town was not free of the tribe's political split, and the Ridge-Watie-Boudinot family—now called the Treaty Party—continued to confront and battle Ross supporters. Often these debates became violent (a problem common to 19th-century politics).

Sometimes the politics became personal. David Kells, a Ross supporter, mutilated and gelded a prize stallion owned by John Rollin Ridge. When confronted, Kells said, "I am willing to stand by my deed with my life."[20] The two squared off, and Ridge warned the man to stay away from him. Kells continued walking toward Ridge, who shot him dead.

"Fearful of reprisals from Kells' vengeful relatives, Ridge fled to Springfield, Mo., notwithstanding the strong element of self-defense," a newspaper said years later. "The Widow Ridge, however, fearful her son would meet assassination, as had her husband and father-in-law, forbade Ridge to return."[22]

Ridge did not stand trial; he took off for California and the Gold Rush. As he headed west, Ridge supported himself by writing poems and stories for newspapers. In 1848, he wrote a piece for the *Texas Northern Standard* advocating Cherokee admission as a state. Ridge wrote about the Gold Rush and Indian affairs for newspapers in Texas, Louisiana and California.[23]

"I suppose you know pretty well from different sources what my history has been in California. It has been a series of bad luck," Ridge wrote his cousin Stand Watie in 1853.[24] "I have tried the mines, I have tried trading, I have tried everything but

with no avail, always making a living but nothing more. If I could have contented myself to remain permanently in the country, I could have succeeded in making a fortune, but I have been struggling all the time to make one in a hurry so that I might return to Arkansas (and I say to you) to the Cherokee Nation also."

John Rollin Ridge

Ridge also continued to write. He was a frequent contributor to the literary magazine, *The Golden Era*,[25] where he shared bylines with the likes of Bret Harte, Mark Twain and Joaquin Miller. His pen-name was Yellow Bird, a translation of his Cherokee name, Chees-quat-a-law-ny. The author Yellow Bird also completed a novel, *The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta*, a story about a Mexican bandit. This may have been the first novel by an American Indian author, and, ironically, it created an enduring stereotype and myth about people from another culture.

"I expected to have made a great deal of money off of my book," Ridge wrote Watie in October of 1854.[26] "And my publishers, after selling 7,000 copies and putting the money in their pockets, fled, busted up, tee totally smashed, and left me, with a hundred others, to whistle for our money!"[27]

Stand Watie

In the same letter, Ridge outlined for Watie a "most powerful friend," a proposal for an Indian newspaper to be located somewhere near the Cherokee Nation. "It would be a medium not only of defending Indian rights and making oppressors tremble, but of preserving the memories of the distinguished men of the race, illustrating their characters and keeping green and fresh many of the most important events of Indian history which should not be allowed to perish.

"Now Stand, if you will furnish the money to buy a press, I will engage to edit it ... I want to preserve the dignity of the family name ... Don't you see how much precious time I am wasting in California? I should be using my pen in behalf of my own people."

Ridge and Charles Watie were hired in 1856 as editors of *The California American*. Meanwhile, Charles Watie continued to press his brother Stand for money to start a Cherokee newspaper—and hinted that Ridge might not be immediately available. Perhaps Ridge changed his mind because he was keen on his new career. *The American* was a political journal, and Ridge could use his pen to promote his ideas about liberty, democracy and the future of Indian country.

After a year as editor—essentially a hired gun—Ridge organized a group of Sacramento business leaders to start a new paper. They purchased the plant of *The California American* and announced the creation of *The Sacramento Daily Bee*. The first issue was published on Feb. 3, 1857, and Ridge wrote: "The name of *The Bee* has been adopted, as being different from that of every other paper of the state, and as also being emblematic of the industry which is to prevail in its every department."[28]

Ridge, the poet and novelist, said he had found his true calling. He divided newspaper editors into "true editors" and "apologies for editors." True editors, he said, must know "everything" and must carry a vast "fund of general information, for there is not a subject which engages men's minds, in whatever range of science or literature, upon which he is not peremptorily called to write."[29]

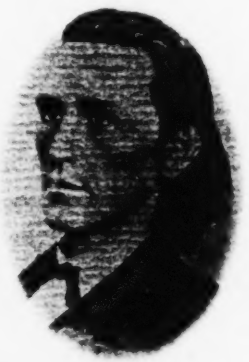
The Bee's editor also called for a new kind of journalism. He attacked the fiercely partisan newspapers as "nothing more than the sneaking apologists of scoundrels who pay them for the trouble of lying." Ridge defended the entry of women into journalism.

And he made it clear that *The Bee's* editorials carried the soul of an American Indian. In an essay about poetry, for example, Ridge writes: "The speech of the North American warrior or chief in council is full of metaphor and the es-

sence of poetry. It is up to the true poet to use his pen, his chisel, or his pencil ... to give us pictures of our nobler selves."[30]

In July of 1857, the Sacramento partners who owned *The Bee* sold it to James McClatchy. (Ridge was headed to another California newspaper as editor.) The official history of *The Bee* begins here—and it is somewhat different from the history just cited. This sentence is from a book called *Newspapering in the Old West* by Robert Karolevitz: "*The Sacramento Daily & Weekly Bee* was founded on Feb. 3, 1857, and under the editorship of James McClatchy, *The Bee* was anything but a drone."

Or, *The Bee*'s official history said it this way: "When the *Sacramento Daily Bee* was founded, Ridge was associated with the paper for a period of two months."



Elias Cornelius Boudinot

According to *The Bee*, it was only after Ridge left Sacramento that he could claim the title of owner or editor. Ridge went on to edit and own several newspapers in California, and all carried the unmistakable mark of a political journalist who cared about his country and its policy toward the Native Americans.

John Rollin Ridge was not the only cousin writing about Cherokee politics in mainstream newspapers. Colonel Elias Cornelius Boudinot, the son of Elias Boudinot, edited *The Arkansian* in Fayetteville, a town bordering the Cherokee Nation. The colonel had no military experience and was only 24 years old.

"Lay aside fears that your editor will get rich faster than his neighbors," Boudinot wrote on March 5, 1859. "We never heard of a man making more than a decent living by the publishing of a county newspaper."

Boudinot encouraged subscriptions from people who agreed with his thinking. And, "do not expect the editor to make honest mention of you and your business every few weeks for nothing."[31]

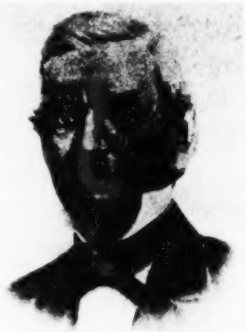
Even though *The Arkansian* was a mainstream newspaper, Boudinot took advantage of every opportunity to ridicule his father's political opponent, Chief John Ross. "Our war upon this chief, whose long cause of thirty years has been sustained with blood and corruption, shall be a war to the knife," Boudinot wrote.[32]

However, Boudinot was fair. He also printed letters from a challenger, "Sofkey."

"Mr. Ross has at last found a champion in Sofkey," Boudinot wrote.[33] "A friend informs us that Sofkey is a word for mangy dog."

("Sofkey" is a Creek word for corn and can be used to describe a sour mash after the corn softens—sometimes dogs get into this mess and gain a unique look.)

But Sofkey was a worthy opponent. He wrote: "As we are not competent to answer you with words and acknowledge that you are our superior—and if we were capable of answering you with a pen, we would not waste our time and words with no such d—d scoundrel as you are, Sofkey."[34]



John Ross

Most of Boudinot's passion was saved for the issue of the day, the growing threat of civil war. The colonel saw the South as the only hope for the Cherokee Nation. "And all abettors of Abolition from the Chief down should be publicly warned that although the South is the natural protector of the Cherokee, Creeks, and Choctaws, yet the South will sweep from its frontier every one who is so base-bold, or insidious, as to raise thereon the Black Flag of Abolition."[35]

Boudinot, his family, Chief Ross, indeed many wealthy Cherokees were slave holders in Georgia and, after removal, in Oklahoma. On this issue Boudinot saw no middle ground.

"The distinctions are hypocritical. ... We believe in aggressive slavery: that it is the duty of all good meaning citizens, if they are able, to own Negroes. We believe the

Creator will inflict a terrible punishment on those who neglect this duty."[36]

As his father had, Boudinot found that the constitutional guarantees of liberty were not always the same for Americans who were not white. One newspaper questioned his right as an American Indian even to vote. *The State Rights Democrat* claimed Boudinot left the Cherokee Nation for Arkansas "either for the country's good or to save his own scalp." The paper claimed the editor was "impudently interfering" in public affairs, adding that "free white citizens" were more qualified to "manage their own affairs without being dictated to by this unnaturalized Indian refugee."[37]

Nonetheless, most in the states'-rights cause considered Boudinot a patriot—and he was rewarded by being named co-editor of the *True Democrat* in the capital city of Little Rock and later appointed chairman of the state Democratic Party. He continued his anti-Union rhetoric and was named secretary to the state's secession convention. During the war, after winning a commission as a lieutenant colonel, Boudinot was a delegate to the Confederate Congress in Richmond. He returned to newspaper writing and editing after the war.

Ridge and Boudinot both excelled at the political journalism of the mid-19th century. They edited newspapers during elections—when the party (most often the Democratic Party) needed their passionate sermons. Both editors also made Indian affairs somewhat mainstream in their newspapers' coverage—although Ridge looked down on tribes less civilized than the Cherokee.

Muskogee to Seattle, Live!

Perhaps the first Native American woman to own a mainstream newspaper was Myrta Eddleman, a Cherokee.[38] Shortly before the turn of the century, the Eddleman family moved to Muskogee, Indian Territory,[39] from near Denton,

Texas. The Eddleman family (and a cousin) purchased several shares of the *Muskogee Daily Times* in February 1897. However the newspaper was deeply in debt and faced "bills upon bills as regular as clockwork."[10] It was a family venture: father David was the editor, daughter Myrta (who owned one-fourth of the enterprise) was business manager and 15-year-old daughter Ora Veralyn Eddleman was society editor, city editor and proofreader.

Debts forced two of the partners to quit, and in June 1897, Myrta was named receiver. Shortly thereafter, the newspaper's ownership was transferred to her mother, Mary Eddleman.

"Mary Eddleman had no practical knowledge of printing, but she had a good business sense and so took up the fight relinquished by her daughter," wrote Daryl Morrison, a librarian at the University of Oklahoma.[11]

She improved the business by contracting with the Associated Press (the first paper in the Indian Territory to do so) and "news of the Spanish-American war kept reader interest high." The family business listed more than 1,000 paid subscribers by 1898. One historian said: "*The Times* grew and prospered under the guidance of this clever family."[12]

Ora Eddleman grew up in that newsroom. She added the job of wire editor to her already busy routine, which included school. She once said: "There's nothing like a newspaper newsroom to give you a well-rounded education."[13]

That schooling included magazines, beginning in 1898. Sister Myrta, now married to former printer Walter Sams, founded the magazine, *The Twin Territories*. Ora, then 18, was hired as editor and a frequent contributor.

"Indian history was stressed from the very first," Morrison wrote. "Although Ora Eddleman wrote many of the Indian articles, she also drew heavily on talented Indian authors of the territories. Among the numerous contributors were Joshua Ross, a noted Cherokee; Pleasant Porter, chief of the Creek Nation; Charles Gibson, a Creek fable writer; and the acclaimed Creek bard, Chinnubbie Harjo or Alexander Posey."

In addition to giving voice to native authors, the magazine was an important source for information about the Allotment Act and other events and trends taking place in the territory.

Alexander Posey

Ora Eddleman gave up her magazine and her career—at least temporarily—when she married Charles Reed, a reporter for the Associated Press from Kansas City. Reed moved to Casper, Wyoming, in 1924 to work for an oil company, and Ora Eddleman Reed found her way back into journalism. A family friend launched KDFN, Wyoming's first radio station.

"The radio station was rather new and was the only station for many miles in any direction. Ora hit upon an idea for a 'talk-type' program which could be used as an advertising gimmick and bring in revenue for the station," wrote librarian Morrison. "The talk show was probably one of the first of its kind! Ora Reed started out with a half-hour program with commentaries on the theme of happiness. She answered calls and letters from listeners with a homespun, optimistic doctrine of happiness and pointing out the bright side of life. She called herself 'the Sunshine Lady.'"

The successful talk-show format expanded to two hours and only ended when the Reed family moved home to Tulsa in 1932. Ora Eddleman Reed tried the same format in Oklahoma, but it did not work.

In one sense, Ora Eddleman Reed stumbled on the perfect medium for a tribal community. Radio built on the traditions of an oral, story-telling society. People could listen to the radio as they would to an elder handing down a story from generation to generation.

John Collier, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs and a student of tribal cultures, saw the opportunity. He budgeted federal money for radio communications in remote Alaskan villages and sponsored a national program to educate the

nation about tribal history, culture and current affairs. The show started January 1, 1937, with 170 stations from Alaska to Florida.

On June 28, 1941, Navajo Chairman J.C. Morgan spoke to thousands of Navajos by radio from his office in Window Rock, Arizona. He read a letter from President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

"I am concerned about protecting our lands from erosion," the letter said. "I am concerned that some of your leaders do not understand that to protect your lands sufficiently you must reduce the number of sheep, and goats, and horses, sufficiently to permit the grass to grow thickly and stop erosion. If our nation is to remain strong, our land and forests and water must be protected and cared for."[14]

The Roosevelt administration used radio to defend its disastrous policy of livestock reduction on the Navajo Nation. So unpopular was the message, that Chairman Morgan praised the president for offering to build water-delivery systems on the reservation but did not say one word in response to the call for thinning sheep and goat herds.[15]

Beginning in the 1950s, Navajos were often hired by Arizona and New Mexico radio stations for shows, announcements and commercials in the Navajo language. As of April 1972, a Navajo public-radio station broadcast from a school in the remote community of Ramah, New Mexico.

"The Ramah community is about 1,000 square miles ... [and] to reach everybody by automobile or pickup truck would probably take about three months, and then you'd have to start all over again. Radio was the logical answer. Everybody can have a radio receiver in the home and get this kind of crucial information about the school," said former programming director Kim Hodgson.

"The beautiful thing about this station is the extent to which the community and the community members have made it their own. It's not all that uncommon for the people just to walk in and say, 'I've got something that I feel is important that I want to talk about,' and to sit down before the microphone and record for half an hour or an hour."[16]

Twenty years later, there are some 25 radio stations, most nonprofit public stations, serving tribal communities across the United States and Canada. One of the commercial enterprises is the Navajo Nation's KTNN, a 50,000-watt AM station broadcasting from Window Rock, Arizona. The station is owned by the tribal government and earns a profit on annual sales of $800,000 per year.

"I like KTNN because most of the time it is in our own language, and the announcers tell us what is going on," said Tom James in the Navajo language. "A lot of us stay at home during the day and have a radio companion. When we are going somewhere, we don't stop listening. We make sure the radio in the truck works. If not, we take our portable. I am weaving a rug, washing the dishes, cleaning the house or tending to the sheep—I always make sure there is a radio beside me. It's my only source of news information."[47]

KTNN is community radio. People call the station and share information about local government, funerals and even traditional ceremony announcements. Perhaps it is that notion of community broadcasting that best characterizes all tribal radio stations, rich or poor.

In the Yukon Territory of Canada, native-controlled CHON-FM broadcasts to the community of Whitehorse and to hundreds of villages that get its signal via satellite. This station has diversity too, programming in Cree, Dene, Lochoux and English. Sometimes the station functions as a town hall, featuring serious discussions about issues, and other times it is a bulletin board, urging winter travelers to check in after they reach their intended destination.

Tribal radio is the only national medium in Indian country. Once a day, *National Native News*, a five-minute newscast, is sent to public radio stations across the country. Tribal radio stations also recently started a national talk-radio show, *Native America Calling*. Using an 800 number and a national satellite consortium, *Native America Calling* presents issues directly to native communities. But the call-in show is starting up at a time when publicly funded programs are coming under increasing attack. Supporters are urging

Congress to keep its funding source intact.

In general, however, tribal radio stations flourish because the medium is relatively cheap. Once a station is built, its costs are relatively low. Gary Farmer, an actor and editor-in-chief of *Aboriginal Voices* magazine in Toronto, has described his vision of a native network of 1,200 stations in virtually every native community.

"Well, the beauty of this idea is creative employment for many indigenous people making radio. Oral culture and voice: Funny voice, voice of reason, voice of comfort," Farmer wrote. "Story: Old story, new story, language. Music, information about maintaining healthy lives, consistent and reliable news about each other from Timisaming, Ontario, to Bethel, Alaska, and down to San Cristobal de la Casa."[18]

Perhaps the most interesting radio enterprise has also been the quietest: Cook Inlet Communications. After the Alaskan Native Claims Settlement was signed into law in 1971, 13 regional native corporations were formed to manage land and assets owned by native people. Cook Inlet Regional Corporation has been one of the most successful, and in the mid-1980s it began buying radio and television stations. Until it sold all of its radio and TV investments this year, Cook Inlet was the single largest minority owner of radio and television stations in the United States.

"It was a good investment opportunity," said Roy Huhndorf, the chairman of Cook Inlet.[19] "We owned 11 stations, and the TV station in Nashville was the most awarded station in the United States."

Except for the Alaskan Native owners, however, Cook Inlet stations did little to promote a minority identity. These were profit-generating stations designed to return money to the shareholders in Anchorage.

Few American Indians worked in television before 1970. Most of those who did were the hosts of weekly public-affairs programs in Minneapolis, Phoenix, Oklahoma City and in smaller markets near Indian reservations. These shows con-

tinue today, often programmed in the early Sunday-morning hours to fill the station's public-affairs commitment.

After the civil unrest in the late 1960s, newspapers and TV stations were pressured to hire more minorities, particularly for on-air reporting positions. One program, now the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education, recruited several potential minority journalists for a workshop at Columbia University in New York City. The idea was to cram four years of journalism training into one summer.

Tanna Beebe

One person who applied was Tanna Beebe of the Cowlitz and Quinault tribes. She was working as communications coordinator for the Intertribal Council of California.[9] "The application required a lot of personal essays," Beebe recalled. "And I worked nearly until the midnight deadline writing essays. I put stamps on the envelope, but still feared missing the deadline, so I wrote a plea for leniency if the package was late, and I put it in the [post office] box before midnight."

A week later, program sponsors asked Beebe to come to San Francisco for an interview.

"I went to San Francisco hours early. I was so nervous. I wandered around and then went to a cafe and talked to a waiter. He was a struggling artist and had great stories about the underground art world in San Francisco. Then I went to the interview.

"The first question was, 'What stories weren't covered by the San Francisco media?' I told the interviewer about what I had learned about the San Francisco art world. I think that tipped the scales."

But the program also required participants to be hired by a TV station or news-

paper. KIRO-TV in Seattle asked Beebe to an interview.

"Again, I arrived early. I sat in the waiting room for several hours. I was one of two women being interviewed; the other was an African-American from Chicago. She had a college journalism background—if I had been the owner, I would have hired her. But I was on time, and she was late; I got the job."

Beebe and Lorraine Edmo, a Shoshone-Bannock from Fort Hall, both went to Columbia. Edmo, who had been working as editor of the *Sho-Ban News*, was hired by KID-TV in Idaho Falls.

"Columbia was so intense," Beebe said. "It was as intense as anything I'll ever want to do again. We worked day and night covering stories. I remember this one weekend when Lorraine and I just had to get away—we went to the Akwesasne [Nation]; we found Indians in New York right away."

After graduation, Beebe moved into KIRO's newsroom and into a cultural chasm. "It was different. Big-time different. I was raised by my grandmother, and I was taught that asking questions was rude. It was a sign of bad breeding. I wanted to write, but asking questions was distasteful," she said. "I was forced to create another personality, someone who could go out and do those rude things and ask questions ... and that person did a good job, but it was so hard."

Another challenge for Beebe was learning how to talk for television. "I spoke so little as a child. I had no voice. They sent me to voice therapy for six months, trying to build throat muscles. But my soft voice still sounded like whispering," she said.

The solution for Beebe was to stand away from the microphone and shout. "Then I was able to project authority."

In the early 1970s it was rare for a woman to be in TV news—let alone an Indian woman. And not all of Tanna's colleagues were thrilled with her hiring. One assignment editor tried to force her out of the business by sending her to the most distasteful stories.

Tanna recalled: "It was just awful stuff. Car crashes. Murders. Blood. But I

didn't quit—and because they tried to get me out this way, they gave me the top stories of the day. I wasn't covering beauty queens or ribbon-cuttings. I was a rookie covering the big stories. I got more experience in one year than most get in five years—and my name became a household word in Seattle."

Tanna Beebe always knew that she was not just another reporter. "People I did not know would come up to me and want to talk or hold my hand or sit with me at a powwow. The humbling was so great, I wondered if I could keep it up. I still don't know how to describe it, because it was the greatest burden and the greatest triumph at the same time."

It was a confusing time, Beebe recalled. She tried to balance her life while living under the spotlight. "I was the president of the Seattle Indian Women's Service League, and I went to powwows, and danced and that's how I saw myself—not as Tanna Beebe, the television reporter.

"I was changing really fast. At first I was in awe of the business and everyone in it. Sometimes in my heart I felt that I was the wrong person. How could they have picked me? The feeling that 'there must be another Indian person who could do so much better' never left me."

Tanna Beebe left daily journalism after five years. She went to work at the Bureau of Indian Affairs because part of her job there was to encourage young people to go into the field of journalism.

"I don't need the spotlight. I like being a public servant," Beebe said.

But Tanna Beebe was noticed on TV. One viewer was a Nez Perce teenager named Hattie Kauffman.

"I actually saw her doing a standup when I was a teenager. The National Indian Education Association was having a conference in Seattle, and I went to it, and Tanna was in front of the cameras, with the lights around her. She was holding her microphone—that was like a home run for me," Kauffman said. "Tanna Beebe was my hero—and my role model. When I was little, I saw her on television, and she opened the door in my head." Kauffman walked through that door and entered an intern-

ship in Minneapolis' WCCO. Soon she moved to Seattle and was a reporter at KING. Then Hattie Kauffman became the first American Indian to work at a national network, to stand before millions of Americans in front of a camera.

Tanna Beebe said: "When I first saw Hattie Kauffman on the air, I cried. I was so proud of her. She was a little kid ... one of the Kauffman kids in Seattle. Then I saw her, and it seemed to me that everything I had ever tried to do was vindicated. I was stunned and so proud."

Like Beebe, Kauffman also felt uneasy about charging into stories.

"The very, very first story I went out on was about a guy who had fallen off a construction site," she said. "I remember going up to the scene, and there was yellow police tape. Police were saying, 'Stand back.' And construction workers were consoling each other and holding each other's shoulders. I did not want to cross over the tape. My instinct was to obey what the police said—and the photographer just stepped right over it, and I had to stick with him. It was my first story. I didn't feel right about it, then the photographer came over and said, 'Who are you going to interview? Ask one of those construction workers what happened.' There was that moment of 'Awgh!—what am I doing? I don't want to do this'—and that was my very first story. But that's nothing compared to what goes on in TV today."

Sometimes the contributions made by Beebe and Kauffman were obvious. Other times, their sway was subtle. When the Quinault Nation in Washington closed its beaches to non-Indians, Beebe reported it for her audience in Seattle. Then she helped CBS News prepare its story so the whole country would understand that the tribe took that action to keep its beaches pristine.

"Anglo reporters would always come back and ask me questions," Beebe recalled.[5] "I understood these [tribal] stories, so I often gave away my scoops."

Non-Indian reporters working with Beebe learned more, not only about the tribal world but about themselves. Beebe covered for television a fishing-rights' dispute that polarized many in the state along racial lines. On one occasion,

Beebe and a [Caucasian] videographer were harassed by bigots shouting obscenities. After a time, "he was ready to throw down his camera and take them all on. He finally understood what racism was all about," she said.

Perhaps the Hantavirus epidemic in 1993 is the one story that best illustrates the influence of growing numbers of Native American journalists in mainstream news organizations. More than a dozen Native Americans were reporters, producers or editors assigned to chronicle that episode. Hattie Kauffman was there for CBS News. Conroy Chino, an Albuquerque-based anchor, covered the story for NBC News. Deenise Becenti, a Gallup, N.M., free-lancer, who helped cover it for National Public Radio and *The Salt Lake Tribune*.

Patty Talahongva, a Hopi, was a producer at KTVK in Phoenix when the story broke. "Whether you like it or not, if you're an Indian person working in the newsroom, you're expected to know [everything about Indian affairs]," she said.

In the early weeks, the story was about a mystery illness that seemed to be killing healthy young people on the Navajo Nation. Talahongva went to the executive producer and urged him to send a crew from Phoenix to the reservation—a five-hour drive. At first he refused. The next day two more people died, and the executive producer said, "OK, set it up."

Talahongva wrote a "reader," a short story for that night's 10 p.m. newscast, and the next day it was live coverage. One week later the mystery illness was a national story.[32]

"I made sure from the beginning that it was not a Navajo disease; we never referred to it that way," Talahongva said. "And we made sure that every victim was not a Navajo."

Karen Lincoln Michel, a member of the Ho Chunk Nation of Wisconsin and a reporter at *The Dallas Morning News*, also asked her editors to allow her to cover the story. "I was reading [stories about the epidemic], and I noticed that there was nothing from the Navajo people," Michel said. She pointed out to her editors that the stories included comments from government officials that were not quite

correct. *The News* told her to pack her bags and go.[53]

Michel wanted to interview a religious leader. She also planned to be respectful. She interviewed the medicine man and helped explain what the Navajo people were feeling in regard to the illness.

Conversely, USA TODAY published a headline that read: "Navajo flu claims 11."[54] Instead of trying to understand the illness or the people, the newspaper coined the most offensive term of the era—and stuck with it. There were no Native Americans working at "The Nation's Newspaper."

Pictures of our nobler selves

The first editor of an Indian daily, a newspaper called *The Indian Journal*, was a Creek poet and journalist by the name of Alexander Posey. He wrote this poem, "Ode to Sequoyah," around the turn of the century to honor the inventor of the Cherokee alphabet.

THE NAMES OF WATIE AND BOUDINOT
THE VALIANT WARRIOR AND GIFTED SAGE
AND OTHER CHEROKEES MAY BE FORGOT,
BUT THY NAME SHALL DESCEND TO EVERY AGE ...

The world did remember Sequoyah. And it did forget the sage Boudinot, his relatives Stand Watie, John Rollin Ridge and Colonel Elias C. Boudinot, Ora Eddleman Reed, Tanna Beebe, and many, many others who made important contributions to the journalism profession. There was Edward Bushyhead, a Cherokee, and founder of the *San Diego Union*; Peter Navarre, a Prairie Band of Potawatomie member, and owner of the *Rossville Reporter* in Kansas; William

G. Pugh, a Lakota and owner of *The Martin Messenger*, and Leon Boutwell, Ojibway, a former professional football player and owner of the Mechanicsburgh, Ohio, *Daily Telegram*. There was Zitkala Sa or Gertrude Bonnin, a Sioux, who wrote for *The Atlantic Monthly* and other magazines, who wrote books and who even composed a full-scale opera.

John Rollin Ridge was talking about poets and journalists when he wrote that Native Americans can use a pen, chisel or pencil "to give us pictures of our nobler selves." But Ridge might as well have been talking about the America that could be, the America that would be the very essence of democracy. This nobler America would embrace native journalists, past and present, and would include other forgotten elements of society. Ridge wanted more women to work at newspapers—and for all readers to understand what female journalists had to say. He wrote a novel decrying the injustice suffered by Mexican-Americans who lived in California during an era of intense anti-immigration laws. Ridge saw oppression the same way, whether it was directed at Cherokee or Mexican miners.

Ridge also understood the inherent power of tribal newspapers. He wrote his mother that if he could start a newspaper in the Cherokee Nation, "I can bring into its column not only the fire of my own pen, such as it may be, but the contributions of leading minds in the different Indian nations. I can bring to its aid and support the Philanthropists of the world. I can so wield its power as to make it feared and respected. Men, governments will be afraid to trample upon the rights of the defenseless Indian tribes, when there is a power to hold up their deeds to the execration [sic] of mankind."[55]

Ridge's words remind us that there is a forgotten relationship between tribal journalism and its mainstream cousin.

"We do know there were messengers in all these tribal societies," wrote Paul DeMain, editor of *News From Indian Country*. "They traveled from clan to clan, from tribe to tribe, letting people know about ceremonies, governmental negotiations, news from the battle front, the birth of a baby, or the directives of tribal

leaders. Among the Ojibwa, the messenger was called 'Oshscabewis.' And certainly it would have been hard not to notice the coming of the white man. I can almost see the messenger on the East Coast—they have discovered ships coming in from the horizon of the sea, white men lost in search of someplace else. The messenger has a scoop and is dispatched to spread the word ...."[36]

Uncovering forgotten journalism history is the first purpose of this report. The second is to validate the notion that it is essential for American Indians and Alaskan Natives to work in the media, both tribal and mainstream.

In the past decade there has been much discussion within the Native American Journalists Association regarding the question of participation in the mainstream media. Some argue that a Native American journalist ought to stay home and work in tribal media, that anything less is assimilation.

But I think the history of Boudinot, Ridge, Beebe and Kauffman shows that there is room for both, that Native Americans can contribute to journalism and still maintain tribal roots.

Does this always work? Of course not. The newspapers of the Indian Territory had mixed reactions to the Sioux and Cheyenne victory over Gen. George Custer—most supported the tribal claims to the Black Hills, but feared that news of the victory would destroy the perception of Indian progress.

And in the first three decades of the 1900s, native journalists used the power of words to defend Christianity and assimilation, often at the expense of tribal culture. This generation of journalists, I believe, was largely influenced by the Bureau of Indian Affairs' system of sending children to boarding schools for education. Captain Richard H. Pratt, superintendent of the Carlisle Indian School, designed the "outing system" to sever ties with tribal culture.

"The solution of the Indian problems hinges upon the destruction of the present systems and devising the means that will disintegrate the tribes and bring them into association with the best of our civilization. Partial destruction of past systems ... will not accomplish the same purpose," Pratt wrote in 1891.[37]

At Carlisle in Pennsylvania, Haskell in Kansas and Riverside in California, Indian students learned to read and write in English. The lessons also included assimilation. An editorial in Haskell's *Indian Leader*, for example, urged the Congress to prohibit peyote use. The magazine discounted any religious use of the cactus button.

"If it were true that any practice employed in religious worship can never be interfered with, there would be nothing to prevent setting up in any of our cities a pagan temple, with prostitutes offering themselves in the name of religion as ministers to lust," the editorial said. It called peyote a "widespread evil among the Indian tribes which can be prevented only by prompt, vigorous, and legislative action."[58]

(Such disrespect for tribal religion ultimately proved ineffective. By 1936, tribal newspapers sometimes printed Indian versions of Christian prayers side by side with news articles about the Native American Church and peyote.[59])

More often than not, however, American Indian and Alaskan Natives who work for the mainstream press do write words that help change this country's perception of its first people. Native American journalists told Texas readers in 1848 that there ought to be an Indian state of the Union. John Rollin Ridge used the power of the press to share an idea about the future with the readers of the *Texas Northern Standard*. Readers in that state still consume ideas from native American journalists: Karen Lincoln Michel penned a front-page story in *The Dallas Morning News* in June 1994 about the spiritual struggle for Native Americans following the peyote way.

"Life is a soulful journey for followers of an ancient religion known as the peyote way," Michel wrote. "In recent years, this spiritual path has become mired in red tape and threat of prosecution in 22 states. What church members consider to be a holy medicine that has been used in religious ritual 10,000 years old is classified as a hallucinogen under the Controlled Substance Act of 1970. ... 'I wish people would quit saying it's a drug,' said Sylvia Nakai, a Navajo from

New Mexico who traveled 1,000 miles to South Texas with her family to gather peyote during Easter week."[60]

Michel made journalism better with that story. She opened the flap on the tipi door and took readers of the *Morning News* inside. They saw an account of a Native American Church ceremony and discovered that this religion shares many values with the religions practiced by Dallas' church-going people. Perhaps it was stories like Michel's that shifted public policy: on Oct. 6, 1994, President Bill Clinton signed the American Indian Religious Freedom Act. One native religion was finally recognized as deserving of First Amendment protection.

Michel's journey to the *Morning News* is important, because it shows how much in common the tribal news media shares with the so-called mainstream press. The idea of news is universal, shared by tribal communities since the beginning of time. The translation of the Navajo word for newspaper literally means "that paper that gossips," gossip being the community's definition of what is news.

A native woman in Alaska is pushing the mainstream media to redefine its notion of what it considers news. Once a week, the television show *Heartbeat Alaska* is beamed via satellite to rural native villages in that state. The show's format is simple: Natives living in the bush send in video reports and tell their own stories.

"It's the voice of the people who live the life," said host and producer Jeanie Greene.

A village that had recently been the subject of a mainstream news story focusing on its alcohol problem provided the impetus for one story.

"'Jeanie, we're more than that,' they told me," recalled Greene. "I said, 'Show me. Send me a tape.' They sent me a video that talked about the sobriety movement and a lunch where the elders were honoring young people."[61]

Greene's television program is important, because few Native Alaskans are represented on television or, for that matter, in print journalism in this state where the native population is 17 percent.

"It's like an alien planet—you never see yourself on TV," Greene said. "To see yourself on TV is an amazing thing."

To make this "amazing thing" happen requires more than the hiring of native anchors in mainstream television. It requires the day-to-day newsroom presence of native journalists whose stories can change the very image of Indian Country and help readers and viewers understand those who "live the life."

In the words of the late Gerald Wilkinson of the National Indian Youth Council: "As media consumers, Indian people are in a particularly harmful position. We consume the thoughts of others about ourselves and the world.

"The media has, for its own purposes, created a false image of the Native American. Too many of us have patterned ourselves after that image. It is time now that we project our own image and stop being what we never really were."[62]

ENDNOTES

[1] Hattie Kauffman, telephone conversation with author, March 23, 1995.

[2] Kauffman, telephone conversation.

[3] The terms "Native American" and "American Indian" are both used in this report. Although I favor "American Indian," it is not always inclusive because it does not include Native Alaskans. The best reference, used when possible, is to identify using tribal affiliation, such as Nez Perce.

[4] Native American producers had aired documentary films and other specials, and Kauffman had worked at *Good Morning America*, where her stories aired frequently. But this was the first story on a network's evening newscast, the premiere showcase for broadcast journalism.

[5] Elias Boudinot, *An Address to the Whites*, delivered in Philadelphia, Pa., May 26, 1826.

[6] Sequoyah was also known as George Gist or Guess.

[7] Wilma Mankiller and Michael Wallis, *Mankiller: A Chief and Her People* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 81.

[8] Boudinot, op. cit.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., pp. 134, 135.

[11] David H. Getches, Daniel M. Rosenfelt and Charles Wilkinson, *Cases and Materials on Federal Indian Law* (St. Paul, Minn.: West Publishing Co., 1979), pp. 172-173.

[12] This case produced an interesting historical debate. President Andrew Jackson was reported to have said: "Well, John Marshall made his decision; now let him enforce it!" However the leading Jacksonian scholar, Robert Remini, told the author in Nashville that Jackson probably never said those words. Although the sentiments were accurate, there was no need for Jackson to do anything—Marshall simply ordered the Georgia court to reverse itself, not to free the missionaries. Moreover, Georgia Governor Wilson Lumpkin released the missionaries on their promise to leave the state, because he did not want to cause a premature fight between the federal court and the state government. The opposition press was infuriated; Lumpkin became the "imbecile Governor" whose "humbug proclamations" placed the state in a miserable light.

[13] Edward E. Dale and Gaston Litton, eds., *Cherokee Cavaliers: Forty Years of Cherokee History as told in the correspondence of the Ridge-Watie-Boudinot family* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939), pp. 1-5.

[14] Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Papers of Chief John Ross, Vol. 1, 1807-1839* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), p. 141.

[15] Perdue, op. cit., pp. 162-164.

[16] Moulton, op. cit., pp. 249-250.

[17] While Boudinot was by birth a Watie, his offspring continued with the surname Boudinot.

[18] Perdue, op. cit., pp. 224-225.

[19] Ibid., p. 27.

[20] Ralph Henry Gabriel, *Elias Boudinot, Cherokee, and His America* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), p. 178.

[21] Harry P. Bagley, "Cherokee Refugee And Newspaper Editor," *The Sacramento Bee* (March 21, 1912).

[22] Ibid.

[23] Much of the John Rollin Ridge story comes from the biography by James W. Parins, *The Life and Works of John Rollin Ridge* (Lincoln, Neb.: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

[24] Dale and Litton, op. cit., pp. 76-77.

[25] Parins, op. cit., p. 75.

[26] Dale and Litton, op. cit., p. 83.

[27] In his excellent biography, Parins makes it clear that the publisher did not go broke, citing a directory that listed the same publisher at a different address. It is less clear, however, what happened to the money Ridge claimed.

[28] Parins, op. cit., pp. 120-139.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] *The Arkansian*, March 5, 1859.

[32] *The Arkansian*, May 16, 1859.

[33] *The Arkansian*, July 30, 1859.

[34] Ibid.

[35] *The Arkansian*, Nov. 25, 1859.

[36] *The Arkansian*, April 6, 1860.

[37] Mary Wood Littlefield, "Cherokee Publishing in Arkansas, 1859-1880," *Native Press Research Journal* (Fall 1986), p. 11-19.

[38] See the article "Twin Territories: The Indian Magazine" by Daryl Morrison in *Chronicles of Oklahoma* (Summer 1982), pp. 136-166. Morrison says Mary Eddleman was one-quarter Cherokee but never enrolled because of a newspaper conflict with a judge answering to the Dawes Commission.

[39] Before statehood, Oklahoma was two territories, the Indian Territory and the Oklahoma Territory.

[40] Morrison, op. cit.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Oklahoma Imprints, 1835-1907: A History of Printing in Oklahoma before Statehood* (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), p. 203.

[43] Ibid.

[44] "Indians At Work," published by the Bureau of Indian Affairs, August 1941.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Transcript of a panel discussion at the Smithsonian Institution, July 6, 1973.

[47] Deenise Becenti, "KTNN: Covering Navajo Country," *Aboriginal Voices*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July-1995).

[48] Gary Farmer, "From the Editor," *Aboriginal Voices*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (July-1995), p. 6.

[49] Roy Huhndorf, conversation with author, Anchorage, Alaska, April 14, 1995.

[50] Tanna Beebe Chattin, telephone conversation with author, January 25, 1995.

[51] Chattin, telephone conversation.

[52] Patty Talahongva, conversation with author, Phoenix, Ariz., January 26, 1995.

[53] Karen Lincoln Michel, telephone conversation with author, March 7, 1995.

[54] USA TODAY, June 2, 1993.

[55] Dale and Litton, op. cit., p.86.

[56] Paul DeMain, "Ochscabewis—The Messenger," *Native Press Research Journal* (Fall 1986).

[57] Francis Paul Prucha, ed., *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the "Friends of the Indian," 1880-1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), p. 275.

[58] *The Indian Leader: A Periodical Printed By and For Indians*, Vol. XXI (Nov. 30, 1917), pp. 18-19.

[59] *See* "The 23rd Psalm in Indian Sign Language" and "Church Group Lists Five Charges Against Religious Policies of Indian Office" in *Taskahomman, The Red Warrior* (Stroud, Okla.), June 25, 1936.

[60] Karen Lincoln Michel, "Congress considers Native American pleas on peyote use," *The Dallas Morning News* (June 20, 1994).

[61] Jeanne Greene, interview with author, Anchorage, Alaska, April 10, 1995.

[62] Gerald Wilkinson, "Colonialism Through The Media," *The Indian Historian* (Summer 1974), p. 6.

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Tanna Beebe	Courtesy of Tanna Beebe.

Editor: *Natilee Daning*
Design: *David C. Smith*

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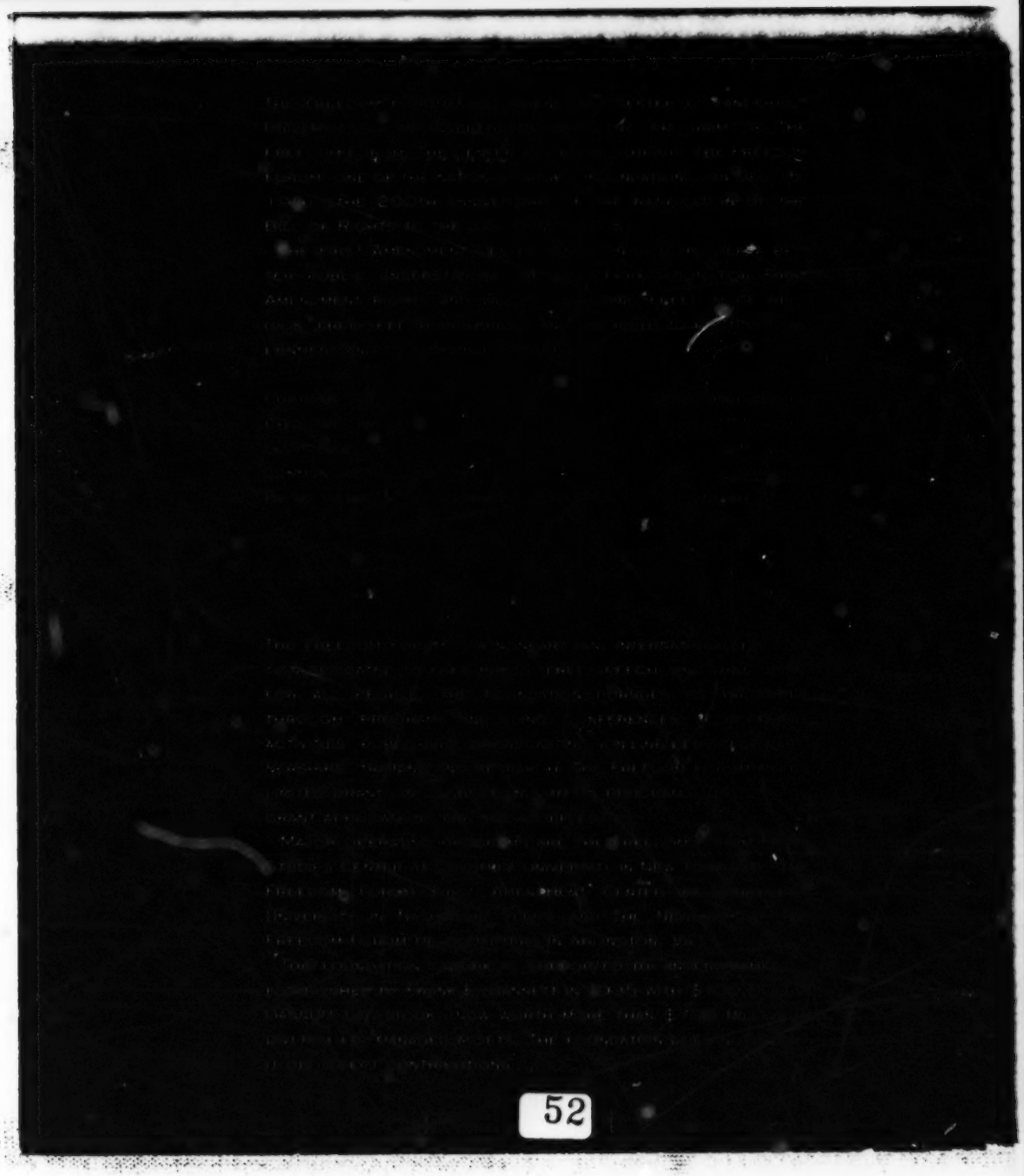

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